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ABSTRACT

The College of the Whole Earth proposes a utopian alternative for community colleges to insure personal success of the people in their own community and in the world. A *raison d'être* for this approach is shown in mankind's growing realization of the earth's limited resources. A multi-campus community college structure could respond to the new problems revealed by man's greater awareness. Such an institution would increase the relevancy of education to many of today's youth and more deeply involve them in the surrounding community. As such, the community and problems associated with its socio-economic structure would constitute the college's core curriculum. Several information collection and dissemination activities would be basic to the school's programs. They would (1) provide channels for information flow about the community's life and economy, (2) examine alternative ways of solving community problems, (3) examine ways of developing community resources, and (4) stimulate a community information influx from worldwide sources about similar problems. Six staff members are critical to the organization's administration: (1) librarian, (2) technical director, (3) research coordinator, (4) counselor, (5) community coordinator, and (6) general secretary. Instructional/research programs would be time-oriented to four 10-week quarters and would make use of gaming models. (AL)

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THE COLLEGE OF THE WHOLE EARTH

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2. A Developmental Research Plan for Junior College Remedial Education; Number 2: Attitude Assessment. November 1968. Out of print. ED 026 050.
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FOREWORD

This is the second in a series of Topical Papers outlining alternatives to the comprehensive community college. The first plan, described in Topical Paper No. 26, presented a student volunteer services bureau. The model offered here similarly brings the students into contact with their community—this time to collect and display information important to all people.

The author, Martin J. Cohen, has been a community college instructor and has participated in R. Buckminster Fuller's *World Game*.

Arthur M. Cohen, Director
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Martin J. Cohen
October 12, 1971

COLLEGE OF THE WHOLE EARTH

Chapter I. NEEDS AND CONTEXTS

The Environment

The present crisis of the environment seems likely to continue, in one form or another, far into the foreseeable future. Given the technologies presently in use, satisfaction of the needs and wants of people requires the use of many planetary resources and results in alteration and transformation of the physical environment. Because industrial man has hitherto regarded the earth as an open system, he has become accustomed to taking his resources from an effectively unlimited pool and to discharging his wastes into an effectively infinite sink, but, as both human population and human ability to transform the environment have increased, the earth's finitude becomes apparent. Mercury and other chemicals discharged into the "infinite" sea show up in tuna and swordfish taken from this same "inexhaustible" ocean.

To strike a balance between man and the environment that includes adequate measures of health and freedom for all humanity will demand careful planning and thoughtful work. As population and social complexity increase, room for error diminishes. Errors increase in geometric progression and, if not corrected, will have long-lasting, worldwide consequences. The very definition of human health assumes tremendous proportions when the well-being of people all over the world can be affected by changes in the industrial processes of a few localities. Formerly abstract questions of esthetics and of philosophy of the good life become immediate as the new technologies alter the background, the sun and shade, the sound and wind, and the smell of the air against which these questions are posed.

Change and the use of advanced technology for human benefit need not be detrimental to human health and satisfaction. Quite the contrary, they have made possible much of the good health and freedom that we now enjoy—but increased use of power requires more careful definition of our goals and greater thought about how to achieve them. As Teilhard de Chardin put it, at once blunt and optimistic, "the task before us now, if we would not perish, is to build the earth."¹ That is manifestly a problem of development sufficient to command all the resources of humanity.

Democracy

As these resources—the new materials, the new and greater sources of power, the intensification of human energy and intelligence—come into play and seek to discover new relations with each other, many existing institutional relations become strained. Change presses in on institutions that do not themselves change.

To achieve healthful, peaceful development, a humane economy requires increasing amounts of information about itself. Where alternative courses of action can be seen and anticipated far enough in advance, those leading to more desirable consequences can be planned and gradually instituted. The result is an evolution in the life of the system whereby everyone benefits. If information is not available in time, or is not of the right kind, decisions must and will still be made, but they may be short-sighted and ill-informed. Better information does not guarantee that all decisions will turn out well, but at least it helps clarify what is being decided on.

All people need information about their lives and the life of their communities if they are to plan their affairs with intelligence and foresight. In a democratic society, the need for information assumes vital importance. The degree of control people can maintain over their own lives and the destinies of their communities depends largely on the information they have about what is going on around them and in the world at large.

He who does not know cannot decide. Those whose information comes primarily from few and distant sources are helpless to deal with problems close at hand. Yet, where the market for information is small and ephemeral, as it must be when its primary application can be only on the relatively small community or district, it seems inefficient to devote scarce talent to the study of local problems and needs. An impoverishment of public life at all levels is the result.

The Young

As the economy is now organized, little use can be made of the energy and intelligence of inexperienced people. The young especially feel isolated from productive work, their participation in the work of society reduced because they are kept in school until they have achieved appropriate credentials for entering the world.

Schools, as institutions, are not designed to function as the universal agents of

the rites of passage into the world, yet, in the main, and for most students, it is their chief function, their principal reason for being. Certainly if one asks students why they are in school instead of elsewhere, a frequent reply is not that they are there to follow some vocation or that they wish to apprentice themselves to some profession, but that "this is where I am supposed to be" or that "I am here to get an education." These responses may be translated as: "to perform the motions society expects of me before it will allow me to join its ranks"—hence the frequent lack of enthusiasm for study and the expressed desire to get by with the minimum allowed by the system.

There are other elements, of course, in the consciousness of the young than their personal need to enter the world and to find a dignified place in it. In an intimate way, they are aware that the world is approaching a crisis of great dimensions. They receive this knowledge at first, second, and third hand. Through their own experiences, as they travel about the world, they see wealth and waste, the manifestation of the power to control the world and a concomitant lack of concern for its perpetual well-being. The reports of scientists and documentaries in the mass media confirm their intuition that much *could* be done, but that little *is* being done to correct the course the culture and economy are following. Through the general ambience of their surroundings, the "youth culture" of consumption and dilettantism, they sense that there is much room in the world for many pleasures and discomforts, but *little* for the dignity of hard and necessary work or for an effort of creation that commands their full energies and abilities.

Any educational institution that does not recognize and point the way to solving these crises cannot capture the respect of the young. They have had their fill of those who are willfully ignorant of the depth and scope of the problems, of those who foretell with perverse pleasure the downfall of the whole civilization, and equally of those who praise unquestioningly the systems and societies of other countries, cultures, and times.

The failing of much schooling, as presently known on our campuses, is not just that it dissatisfies many engaged in it, or that it is oppressive and tends toward conformity to an imperfect economic and social system. The great lack is that, by example and method, it encourages complacency toward the great crises the world is undergoing and the mortal contradictions and unprecedented opportunities it faces. Thus the students' demands for curricular relevance are not fundamentally requests for change in this or that part of a basically static curri-

culum, but are appeals for the colleges to take notice of the full scope of what is happening in the world and to engage themselves in work to meet the threat.

It is unreasonable to expect faculties, trained in a tradition of knowledge for knowledge's sake, or teachers, who see the transmission of information as their primary job, to work on the problems of the world in any great numbers, much less to take on an advisory role in the work of their students. That is not the reason they entered the profession. Thus, when students demand relevant studies, they ask in ignorance for something beyond the capacity of most college faculty to give, and something most teachers regard as inappropriate to their calling.

It is difficult, however, for most students to admit that their demands are impossible. Such an admission, coupled with knowing the urgency of the issues at stake, would place the burden of responsibility for the well-being of the world on their own shoulders. And they, deprived of useful work in the past, are not equipped to accept such a large burden.

Resolution of society's crises will require the participation of many people, including those heretofore regarded as unqualified—among them, the young. They must be brought in, not merely as witnesses and strong-limbed helpers, but as actors in their own right. The young participate in such a manner in protest demonstrations and, to a lesser extent, in music festivals, but these brief moments of participatory exhilaration neither last nor lead to further action. Instead, they leave the young even more dissatisfied with the adult institutions of a society they seem condemned either to enter or to attempt to avoid.

If institutional education is to consist not merely of schooling, with its domination by credits and credentials, but of activity perceived as worthwhile both by those engaging in it and by the rest of society, it must come to terms with the world crisis. This does not mean regarding the crisis as only one of many topics of study, or surrendering the vision of the magnitude and duration of the crisis to a preoccupation with the day-to-day vicissitudes of its effects. It requires an institutional purpose equal in scale to the crisis itself.

Community Colleges

Community colleges in the United States have taken as their functions the provision of post-secondary education for all who can benefit by it and the teaching of any subject or skill for which a requisite number of students and a qualified instructor can be found. This has meant that they offer instruction in a great

variety of disciplines, skills, vocations, and academic subjects. The various functions of the colleges have not been integrated, however, and most divide their curricula according to whether they are considered academic (meaning "university transfer"), vocational (meaning specifically "job- or work-oriented"), developmental studies (meaning "remedial") or community service (meaning "whatever does not fit the other categories").

In cooperation with their communities, the colleges have carried out their functions in a pragmatic manner. Where they have been willing to offer new services, the community has usually been willing to support them; conversely, where the community has requested the services, the college has usually been willing to provide them. While critics and educational theorists have both chided the community colleges for their lack of curricular unity and praised them for their willingness to serve so many felt needs of their communities, the colleges and communities have usually gone ahead according to their own consciences and the press of the local political realities.

The precedent of serving the community's many educational needs through various instructional modes and self-defining programs has already been established in the community colleges. If this precedent were extended in two directions, it would help the colleges maintain their vitality and extend their influence, both in their communities and throughout the educational profession.

First, alternatives to the classroom-and-textbook model of instruction need to be encouraged and developed. Whether the classroom contains five hundred seats or thirty seats or two seats, it represents an attitude toward learning that applies to a limited number of purposes and that directs a limited number of instructional means to a limited number of educational ends. The textbook as an instructional device, whether hardbound or paperback, auto-tutorial program or audio-tutorial laboratory, is likewise limited in the kind of learning it can foster. If community colleges are to be really effective in serving a client population with varying needs, they must consider accepting alternative models of learning within their walls.

Second, a coherent philosophy of schooling consistent with a variety of educational ends and learning styles should be developed for the colleges. It would make clear the goals of the whole institution for its community and would

express its understanding of the relationships among the many subordinate goals it espouses and the differing means it employs to achieve them. An articulated philosophy is needed because, much as the colleges need diversity in the ends they seek and the means they use, they also need balance and a clear sense of priorities. Otherwise their various programs may be at the mercy of conflicts between innovators and traditionalists, proponents of practical and of academic curricula, and they will find fears and jealousies contaminating those very planning discussions that should be governed by a common concern for how the institution can fulfill its goals.

One of the fruits of diversity can be the vitality that results from a healthy cross-fertilization of minds within the institution. This can be achieved if the different functions meet, not in an ill-defined sphere where they are forced to compete for space, money, and personnel, but where each has a clear sense of purpose within the institution and can affect the others through force of example.

It is already possible in many communities for a single institution to serve different needs and client populations and to grant each a degree of satisfaction. The community college does not do everything. It is not the only educational institution serving the people of its community, and frequently, not even the community's only institution of higher education, but it does do several things. This paper presents a plan by which it may further serve its community.

The plan suggests a new institution, because it wishes to focus on new means to new ends. The institution proposed here may be on a separate campus in a multi-campus district or a discrete, autonomous program on the campus of an existing college.

Chapter II. COLLEGE OF THE WHOLE EARTH

A need served at present only marginally, if at all, by community colleges is for information on how to further the life of the community. The need is emphasized by the rapid changes occurring today.

The society and communities in which the colleges function are changing rapidly. More people move from place to place every decade. New technologies open up opportunities and the need for some kinds of work, but they also make other jobs obsolete. As methods of mass communication change, the forms of political action change, just as do the issues and ends for which people work.

Every social institution is touched by these changes, yet, aside from noting local newspaper, radio, and television reports, and an occasional mention in regional and national media, the public gives little notice to these changes as they affect specific communities. Little public energy is expended on monitoring the changes or on securing accurate information about them and the trends they are setting. While businesses and social or government agencies may collect information relevant to their own functioning, little of it is made available to the public in readily comprehensible form. Thus, when public issues arise—decision on a referendum, changes in city zoning patterns, the raising of tax bonds for schools and public utilities—citizens are often uninformed about their substance and context.

The institution proposed here is one whose prime task is the collection, tabulation, and dissemination of information for and about its own community or district. It is suggested that the necessary information be gathered, sorted, and disseminated using the energy and intelligence of the young people of the community itself. This is *The College of the Whole Earth*.

The College of the Whole Earth seeks to fill the need for relevant information through four basic programs of data collection and dissemination. *First*, it provides channels for a continuous flow of information about the life and economy of its community and district. It follows trends and patterns in the flux of the economy, documents them, and tries to anticipate events on the basis of the information it collects. Most important, by collating the information from many sources, it shows relations among events in separate parts of the community.

Second, the college examines alternate ways of solving community problems and

tries to provide information about the consequences of following any of the various paths.

Third, it examines possible ways of developing the community resources and increasing the wealth and variety of life in the community. It tries to show how the quality of life in the community can be improved and examines the likely consequences of such changes.

Fourth, the college can stimulate an influx of similar information to the community from other parts of the world. This information, showing world trends important to the life and economy of the community, will be adapted by the college and made relevant to local needs.

Most of the work in these information collecting and disseminating programs is done by college students. It is their primary educational activity during their attendance at the college. All other educational programs of the college focus on preparing the students for the work and on facilitating their carrying it out. The skills that are learned, the disciplines that are exercised, the tools and resources that are made available are all directed to helping the students fulfill the information-processing mission of the college.

The plan proposed here is for *education through action*, not for a revised form of schooling. It involves the work of many people—some qualified in appropriate ways, and some unqualified in the eyes of society. Through working together, they perform services for society in the manner of a professional agency. In consultation with their community, they determine the services required at each step in the evolution of their work. Both students and faculty determine ends and means within the framework of their common work. Thus the college is more an institution through which people work *in* society than one in which they prepare *for* society.

In gathering these data and examining the choices open to the community, the students involve themselves in the life of the community. Through performing a cooperative service for it, they engage the respect of the community. Because their work is up to their full level of achievement, and because they can see its results, they know it is not trivial. Thus the students learn to respect and depend on themselves and each other, and find the dignity they need to assume similar roles in the life of the community.

Organization

An advisory board, composed of interested members of the community, oversees the functioning of the college. Board members are drawn from the faculty at a nearby university, managers of local industry, staff of municipal and district planning boards, and local radio and television professionals. Each group represents an area of interest to the college, helps it maintain balance in its activities, and facilitate its work in the community.

A small full-time staff runs each college center. Staff members are chosen for their experience in related work and for their commitment to the philosophy of the college. Specific degrees or credentials are not required, but the following qualifications are expected.

The *librarian* should have some experience in systems analysis and educational media. His first responsibility is to make available published materials, books, articles, films, tapes, etc. to help the students in their search for information. Thus, in addition to providing easy access to reference materials, he will also help them find texts and programs as background for their research. The college has a full complement of auto-tutorial materials to help students learn relevant skills and techniques; the librarian tries to make them available as needed. Since the students are producing many documents of direct interest to themselves and to future students, the librarian catalogs them for future accessibility. He may find that some selective form of information dissemination will help him accomplish these tasks. With the help of consultants from a local data-processing company, he may set up a time-sharing system and train students to service it.

The *technical director* should have experience in publishing or television production. He is concerned with helping students document the results of their work in whatever medium will be of use to other students and to people in the college district. He teaches students to use and take care of the tools and instruments needed for producing media and sees that they are available. He is also concerned with general college programing, with scheduling and allocating the use of space in the college, and with orienting new students to the college.

The *research coordinator* should have experience in demographic research or a closely-related area. He helps students determine the problems and areas on which information is needed and helps them master the research techniques to find it. He may also encourage groups of students with complementary abilities to work together on certain projects.

Since the students are not only researchers, but also young people trying to find themselves in the world, one of the staff should be a trained *counselor* who can work with them individually and in groups. The counselor may find that students can best help themselves, and, if so, will organize groups for that purpose.

A fifth member of the staff, the *community coordinator*, should be responsible for coordinating the work of the college in the community. He arranges for displays of students' work and for meetings with civic bodies and other community groups. He may arrange for student visits to local industries and utilities to observe the processes they are studying and he may also invite people from the area to speak on campus.

The college should have a *general secretary* to answer inquiries, take care of the correspondence, and keep track of day-to-day accounts. Students, paid subsistence wages, should help all staff members. These students should have at least three to six months' experience working in the college and should continue with their own projects while they help maintain the institution.

Since the purpose of the college is to produce and disseminate information in and for the community, its early organization should be modeled more nearly on working offices than on either schools (with their blocks of classrooms) or universities (with library carrels, seminar rooms, and general collegiate atmosphere).

Centers of the college enroll no more than 150 people at a time. This limit enables them to work in a great variety of housing, easily and cheaply obtained, but with enough space for their activities. It also helps the college to remain an institution where people can work, establish their own conditions for work, and have ready access to the tools they need.

The space layout of the college might be modeled after production-oriented industries such as television studios or design-engineering offices. Since the work will be changing from term to term and evolving rapidly, permanent or even semi-permanent arrangements of equipment and space are of minimal use. The space may be cleared completely every twelve weeks and rearranged many times within that span, if the work is to remain responsive to community needs and student progress.

The visibility of the college in the community is not necessarily restricted to campuses or buildings. Even its centers may have little to suggest the typical educational institution. Few rooms are designed to hold thirty or forty people. If possible, the college is housed in large open spaces and has movable partitions.

Anyone coming to one of the college centers might find a few displays of work-in-progress or some half-finished models. What should be most apparent is the people, talking and building. Most of the time, these people constitute but a small fraction of the staff and students of the college; others are deployed around the community, seeking data, arranging showings of their films and displays, and organizing presentations for and discussions with community groups.

Four times a year, to ensure economy of operation and flexibility and efficiency in the use of space and equipment, and to display its work to the community, the college lets itself undergo a "revolution." During these weeks of open house, all space allocations to projects within the college are dissolved and the entire space transformed into exhibits for the community. When the new sessions begin, space is re-allocated for current projects. Because no dead spaces are allowed to accumulate and because much of the work of the college takes place off campus, space allocations for projects are generous enough to obviate the need for dickering over them.

People and Program

The College of the Whole Earth's program is made up neither of courses in subject areas nor of preparation for specific jobs. Broadly speaking, it is a program of experience in a special kind of community service and of training in the skills necessary to carry out and expand it.

Because so many different skills are used in the work of seeking, evaluating, transforming, and disseminating information, the program resembles in some ways a general studies curriculum with emphasis on the practical arts and sciences. The difference is that, although many disciplines of work and study are involved, all focus on the current tasks. Study of a skill is immediately translated into practice—to accomplish a useful piece of work. Indeed, skills are learned by students only as they see the need to use them for a task at hand or for one in the near future. The program has no required curriculum of skills or subject areas.

Those who enroll in *The College of the Whole Earth* find themselves in an "attitude of work." An interdisciplinary comprehension of how their community, society, and world work comes to form the basis of how they understand their own tasks. Students construct their own work designs and implement them in cooperation with their fellows. Rather than doing this haphazardly, they have the use of the same powerful tools as are used for solving large problems and accomplishing complex tasks in the government, industry, and business they are studying. Thus they may become familiar with some of the systems approaches such as PERT, the Program Evaluation and Review Technique ⁵ and the critical-path method of work accomplishment. They may use some of the task-differentiated and division methods of production engineering in their team work and become familiar with the process of solving problems step by step, from identification through analysis to the design and testing of solutions.

Through their work in the community, these students of *The College of the Whole Earth* acquire a wide perspective on the many human and material factors that make up economic and social problems and on the complexity of their inter-relations. In studying local and regional ecology, they find subtle reinforcement of these insights in the complexity of all life. With such insight and with powerful problem-solving tools at their disposal, students can aspire to and be able to produce workable alternative designs for the development of their community. They can also direct their constructive orientation to future work and study.

Harold Taylor, in discussing the goals of alternative educational systems, maintains that a fit question about the goals of an education program is, "What kind of person is produced?" ² Insofar as that question is as appropriate to other institutions of higher education as it is to *The College of the Whole Earth*, the answer, we hope, will be "a citizen-scientist." It is expected that, as a result of their experience in the college, students will be reinforced in several abilities and personal qualities and will exercise them in whatever sphere of human activity they choose to make their commitment. Concern for the world will be foremost in the minds of the students. They will not simply be *interested* in the life of their own community and society, they will also want to *improve* it through action. Their critical awareness of what is happening in the world leads them into avenues of work where they can be creative and productive. They are able to take the initiative in defining problems and working toward their solution. Their experience in carrying tasks

through to meaningful conclusions leads them to regard themselves as competent workmen, encouraging them to apply high professional standards to whatever they do. Accustomed to seeking out and using high-quality sources of information relevant to their work, they find the world a storehouse of information.

As the college evolves, new centers are created, seeded with the experienced participants of the old centers. Each center undergoes its own evolution within the constraints of the collective purpose of the college, while also maintaining communication with the other centers. As students and other participants in the college increase in number, and as their work proves valuable in their eyes and to the community, more sophisticated tools are used to further their work and to maintain communication. Several centers within a district or region may be joined, by a computer-mediated, data-sharing network, with each other and with other communities and regions. *The College of the Whole Earth* emphasizes the use of local energies and resources, but it also recognizes the importance of worldwide electronic communication as the way to understanding the systems it studies. World ecology and industry are complex and interwoven nets of information and activity.

Models

While evolution of the college calls for the autonomous setting of goals and procedures through cooperation of students, staff, and community, initial guidance may avert waste of human energies and college resources. Several models for such direction are available. The *World Design Science Decade* and *World Game* models proposed by Buckminster Fuller and his associates are among the most comprehensive.^{3,4}

The *Design Science Decade Documents* (1963-1967) include extensive bibliographies and data checklists for the study of human biological and economic systems, and for the examination of global ecology. They also include essays on methodologies useful in such studies. Emphasis in these works is on understanding the world through study of its regenerative systems, systems of transformation of energy and material that impinge on people's lives. Some of these systems are the familiar, natural ones, involving carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, water, and solar energy, but descriptions of industrial uses of energy and material are also included — for example the isolating, refining, distributing, re-collection, and reworking of important minerals and metals.

Fuller's group has recently published the first in a series of documents that outlines the results of some of their experiences in conducting *World Game* philosophy workshops in colleges and universities. It suggests how to collect and display the kind of data the students in *The College of the Whole Earth* may study and offers models of how such study and work groups can be organized.

Altogether, the documents are an important attempt to make more comprehensible some of what is already known about the working of the earth and people on it. Without assuming that the readers have much prior background, they point the way to further research. Used in *World Game* seminars, these documents are accessible to both high school students and professional people. In *The College of the Whole Earth*, they would not be used as textbooks, since the text of the college is the community itself. Instead, they show how to approach first-time study of the community as a whole, with all its interacting systems. As the college learns about its own community, it will find unique correspondences and diversions in its systems that will be useful in studying the whole world.

Time Sequences

The college operates all year. Its work is divided into four sessions of ten weeks each, separated by breaks of two to four weeks. During one week of each break, the college displays the work of the preceding sessions and invites people from the community to participate. At this time, the college also registers students for the succeeding session.

When a student enters the college for the first time, he starts three weeks of orientation, during which he is introduced to the special character of the college. He will learn about the methods and goals of the *World Game* and of study in his own community. He will meet the students with whom he will be working, some of them veterans of previous sessions of the college. He will have opportunities to test his pre-conceptions about the college against his own observations of how it works and against the testimony of people who have experienced it. At the end of these three weeks, he will choose an area of study concerning the community and will join a group working on a problem in that area. This will continue for about three weeks while the student is gradually integrated into the on-going work of the group. During the next three weeks, he will help with

the group's research. The last week of the session he will devote to preparing demonstrations of the group's work, creating displays, and writing reports.

After the break, continuing students meet in work groups to explore the project further, to learn to master new research tools and techniques, and to apportion research tasks among themselves. When, after about two weeks, they have formulated a suitable question, they will design a project for the session and begin collecting data. New students who join the group are integrated into its activities and given tasks. The whole group works on the project as outlined above, finishing with the preparation of a report, display, and demonstration.

It is important that groups prepare a display of their work each session so that other students can see how far it has progressed. These displays may help new students decide which group they want to join. Since some will want to change areas of work from one session to the next, the reports will also serve as markers in their own program, and help familiarize them with the work of the group they are joining.

Questions

Are inexperienced students mature enough to take on this kind of research? Certainly *The College of the Whole Earth* is not the place for all young people. However, experience with the *World Game* seminars, with high school National Science Foundation and Westinghouse Science Talent Search projects and with science fairs demonstrates that many students of high school and college age can do sophisticated work with minimum help and guidance. The college is designed to encourage and lead students to do the work required for effective research.

Will these students be wasting their time by delaying entrance into a credit-and-course program leading to a degree or occupational certificate? In the context of *The College of the Whole Earth*, knowledge is needed to perform a real task at hand and relevant information is available to accomplish it. Students who join the college find that situation ideal for meaningful learning and satisfying work. Those who have decided in advance on a narrow specialty and would be unhappy in a program that directs their attention to the world around them, should follow their own goals. On the other hand, those who want to learn about the world as it is, to help solve the large problems shared by everyone, or simply to participate in a stimulating cooperative activity, will probably profit

from their time in *The College of the Whole Earth*. If, as seems increasingly the case, many colleges and universities make it possible to obtain credit by examination and performance tests, students with experience in *The College of the Whole Earth* may find much of their work recognized by the institutions to which they transfer.

What are the relationships of the community and the college? Cooperation between college and community is another goal of *The College of the Whole Earth*. Through its regular programs, created and produced by students, the college presents its findings to the community. The presentation is made within the college mainly during the breaks, when the college opens its doors to the community. At these times the students' work of research and information preparation is interrupted as they show its results and the work in progress to the people of the community and to each other. This is also an especially good time for people who may be interested in joining the work of the college to see what is being done and to speak with the students and staff.

According to the current needs of the community and the abilities of students and staff, the research work of the college will encompass a wide range of problems. Students may do short-term work to help the community with an immediate decision by providing data on the implication of any alternative actions contemplated. Their medium-term research may extend up to five years, helping the community plan its future in relation to anticipated regional and world situations. They may also do long-term research, giving the community information about trends in world economy and technology that would be useful in making major decisions about community utilities, zoning, taxation, and education. In doing all this research, the college would be acting, not as a consultant called in by the community for a specific purpose and making definitive recommendations, but as a general advisor presenting relevant information and working out likely consequences of various actions. The college would work on its own initiative, choosing the topics and questions to be investigated and determining how to present its results to the community. In that way, it would hope to work for the benefit of the whole community rather than for any faction of it.

There are several practical reasons for each center of *The College of the Whole Earth* to choose its own community as an object of study. The community, as defined by the district boundaries of the college, is of suitable size for intensive

surveys of its needs and resources. All the information sought by the surveys may be found within the district, within commuting distance of the college and of the students' homes. The economics of such communities are complex enough that the survey staff can consider each community a microcosm, a sub-system of the whole earth. Thus, to learn to deal with a whole earth system, students will start by dealing with a smaller, but whole, system, one of manageable size with which they are intimately related.

A Larger Context

Much of the inspiration for *The College of the Whole Earth* derives from the forceful presence and cogent thought of Buckminster Fuller in discussing his ideas for the *World Game*. It seems appropriate in concluding this plan for a new institution to review some of the *World Game* ideas expressed by Fuller and realized by him and his co-workers.

The working assumption of Fuller's *World Game* has been that wars result from the competition of people and nations for control of access to the limited materials needed to sustain and develop human and social life on the planet. On the assumption that there will never be enough to go around, people fight and, if necessary, kill to assure that they and their children will survive.

Fuller's challenge to this assumption arises from his observation of this century's growth in the material well-being of an increasing world population. He suggests that it may soon be within the power of humanity to care for all its members; that the world can be made to "work" through consciously conceived and applied designs for the provision for human needs; and that this goal can be accomplished, not primarily through forced redistribution of existing wealth, but through the creation of new wealth by applying human intellect—in short, through people understanding and using to advantage the natural laws of the universe.

Thus the concept of *World Game* involves the study of human needs, an inventory of world resources for meeting them, and a design of how to use the resources most efficiently.

The *World Game* program's directness and idealism appeal to many young people. Since Fuller made a full public brief of his ideas and plans during the summer of 1969, subsequent seminars on *World Game* have made many people

enthusiastic about starting the work. As a model for higher education, the *World Game* idea offers a purpose and an opportunity for study of the world that is lacking in most college and university programs.

While these first *World Game* seminars and workshops have met with enthusiastic support from the students, professionals, and lay people who have joined them, Fuller has been careful to note that these groups are engaged only in activities related to *World Game*. Most participants have not possessed the skill, ability, or dedication necessary to do the actual work of assembling world data and producing the needed technological designs. This conflict has resulted in considerable frustration. Many young people are tantalized by the prospect of dealing with world problems in a real and constructive manner, but are frustrated by the enormity of the problems they encounter and their own lack of expertise. They are eager to begin work on problems that they can handle and that are also meaningfully related to the betterment of the whole world. The purpose of *The College of the Whole Earth* is to give young people a chance for real work on some of these problems. It does this by creating a place where "unqualified" people, interested in doing such work, can find useful tools, space, and guidance. Its specific function is to make information about civic and environmental questions readily available to people in their communities.

Certainly it is utopian to propose that a community college set as its goal the success of all the people, both in its own community and in the world. The purpose of this paper has been to show how such a proposal is a feasible and healthy first step for a community college, a step that is not only rooted in the institution's history, but also answers its present and future needs. Such a proposal requires that the college commit itself to the world, as well as to its students, who are part of the world. It requires that it take responsibility for its actions and for the directions those actions take. Service to the community takes on a new dimension when the college begins to examine critically its own role and its commitment to the whole.

Many students who are entering college are eager, even longing, to find such a commitment in the institution they enter. They sense the magnitude of the world problems with an immediacy that comes from their lifelong witness, through electronic information media, of the consequences of unresolved situations all over the world, yet they often search in vain for a coherent vision of their solution. Their allegiance is sometimes asked by social insti-

tutions (more rarely, their energy or muscle), but very seldom has their intelligence been thus engaged in work that leads to solution of these problems and to the success of all in their community or the world. *The College of the Whole Earth* is one institution offering them such a direction.

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